



(12) **United States Patent**
Choe

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,275,694 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Mar. 1, 2016**

(54) **FPGA EQUIVALENT INPUT AND OUTPUT
GRID MUXING ON STRUCTURAL ASIC
MEMORY**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 1147 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/039,447**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 3, 2011**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Continuation of application No. 12/429,902, filed on Apr. 24, 2009, now Pat. No. 7,901,999, which is a division of application No. 11/405,807, filed on Apr. 17, 2006, now Pat. No. 7,542,324.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G11C 8/00 (2006.01)
G11C 7/10 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G11C 7/1006** (2013.01); **G11C 7/1051** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC .. G11C 7/1006; G11C 7/1012; G11C 7/1051;
G11C 7/1578; G11C 8/10; G11C 8/12
USPC 365/189.02, 198, 214, 219, 230.02,
365/230.05, 230.06

See application file for complete search history.

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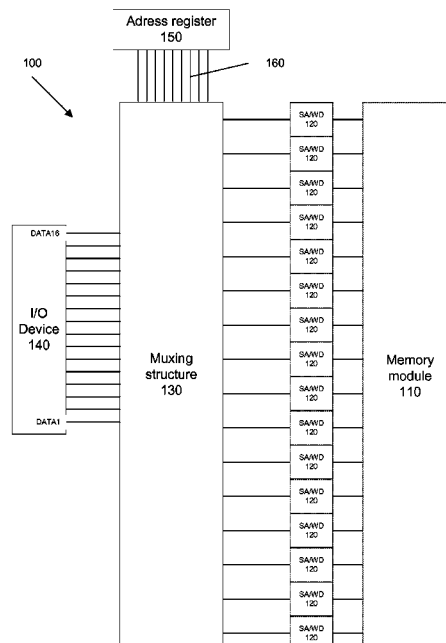
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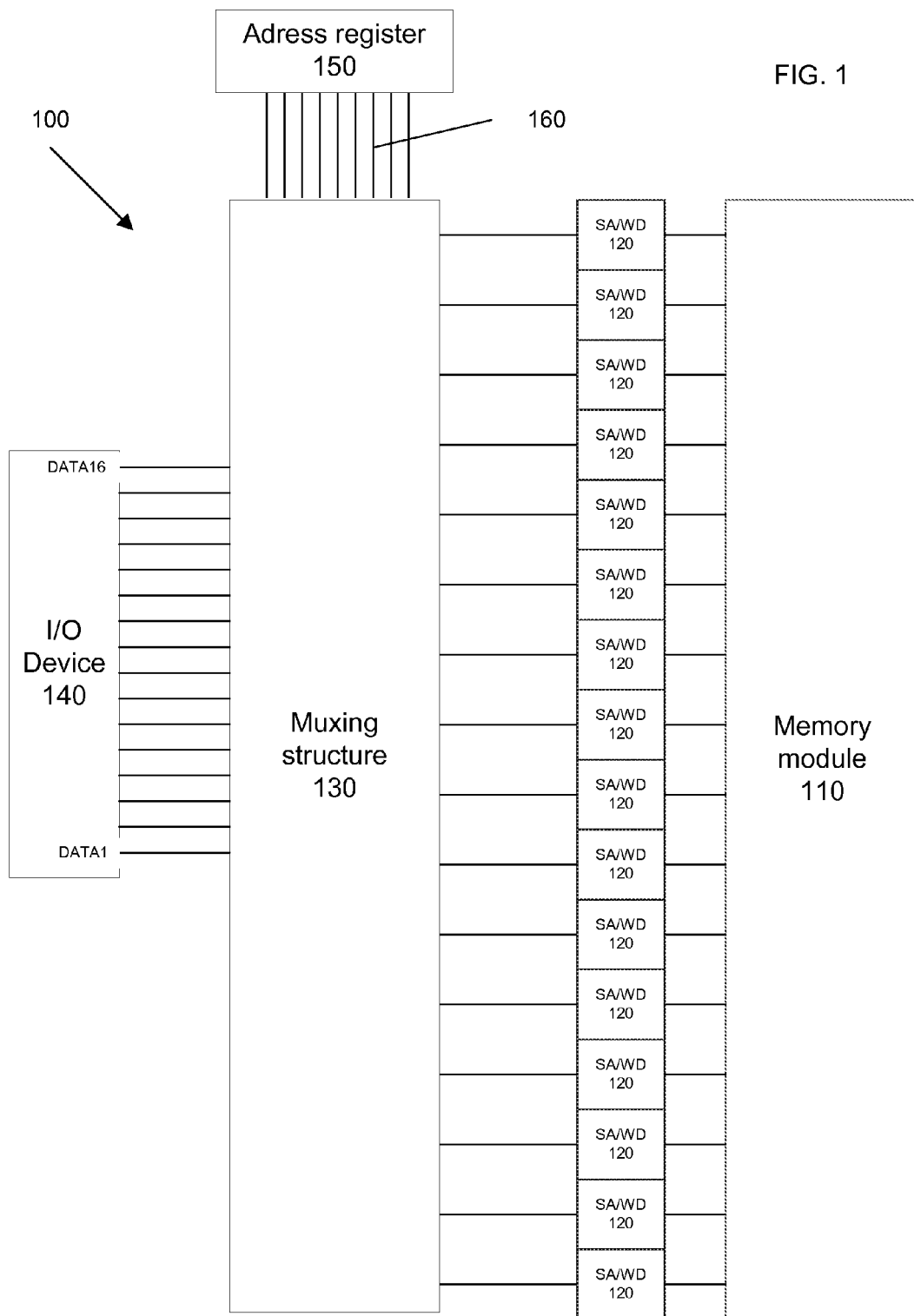
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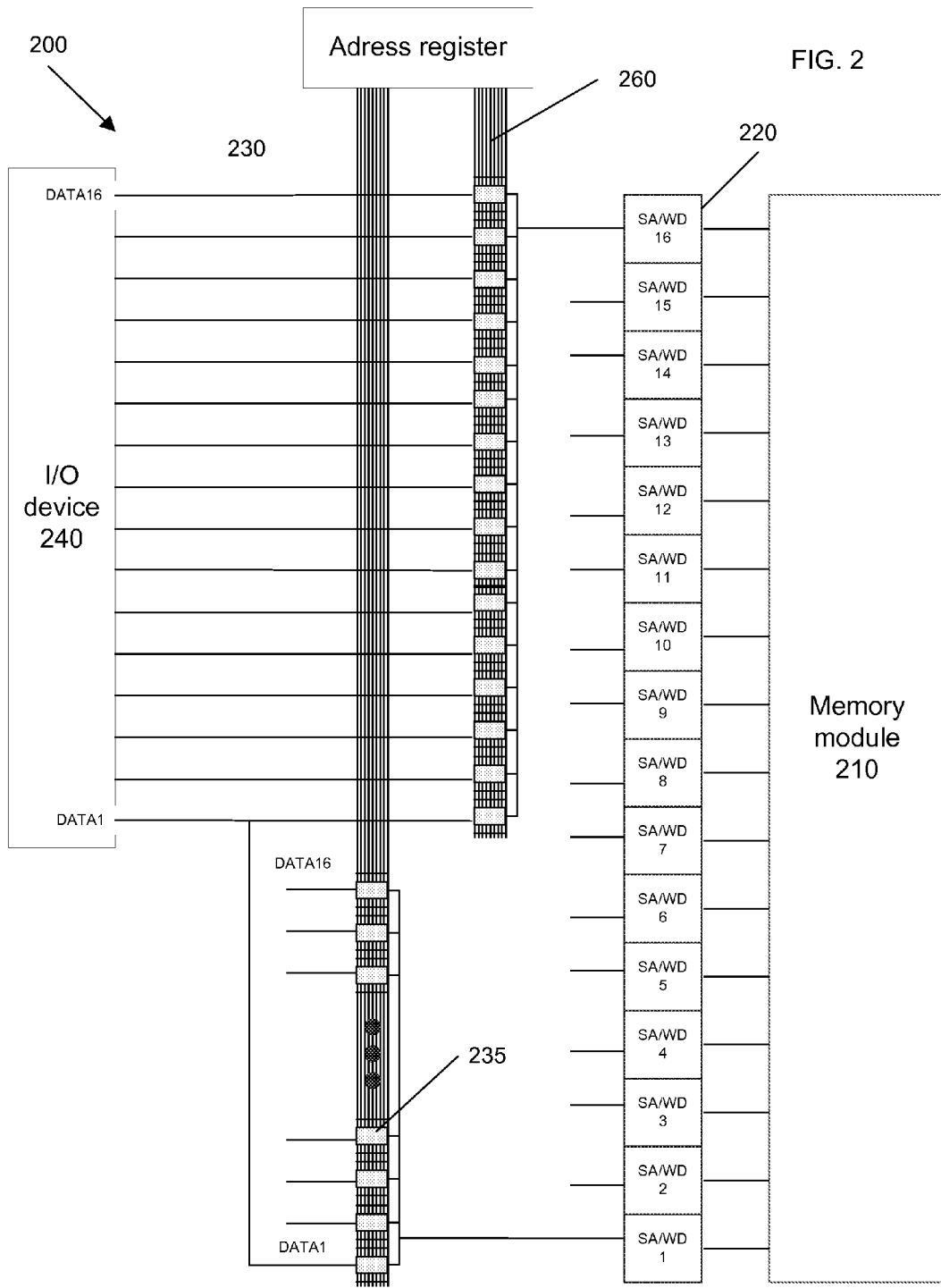
(57) **ABSTRACT**

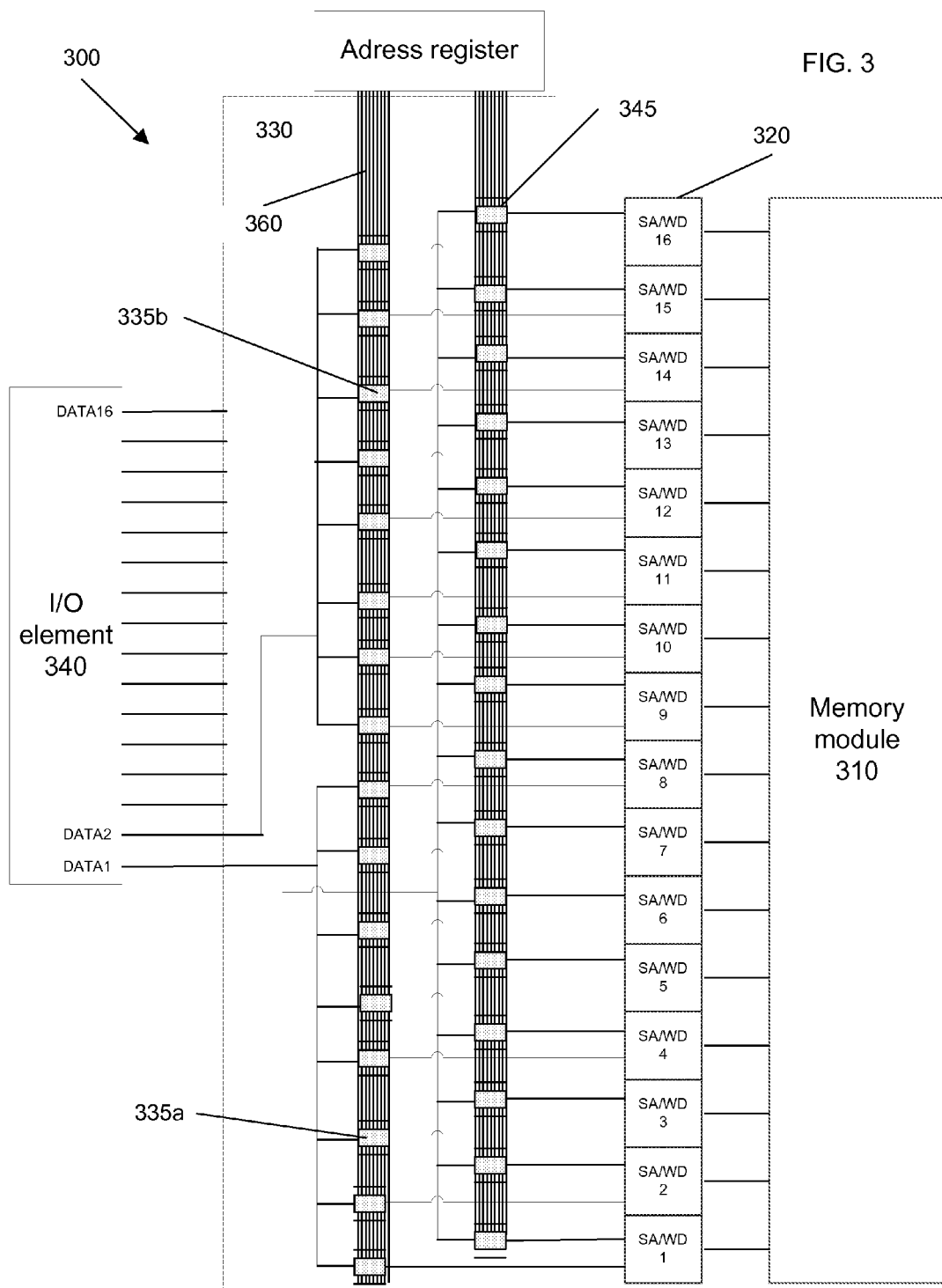
The present invention provide circuits, methods, and apparatus directed to an integrated circuit having a memory interface that is configurable to have one of a multiple different bus widths. The memory interface has a first set of lines and a second set of lines. The first and second set of lines are arranged such that there are multiple locations at which a via may be placed to connect a line of the first set to a line of the second set. The placement of the vias determines the bus width of the memory interface.

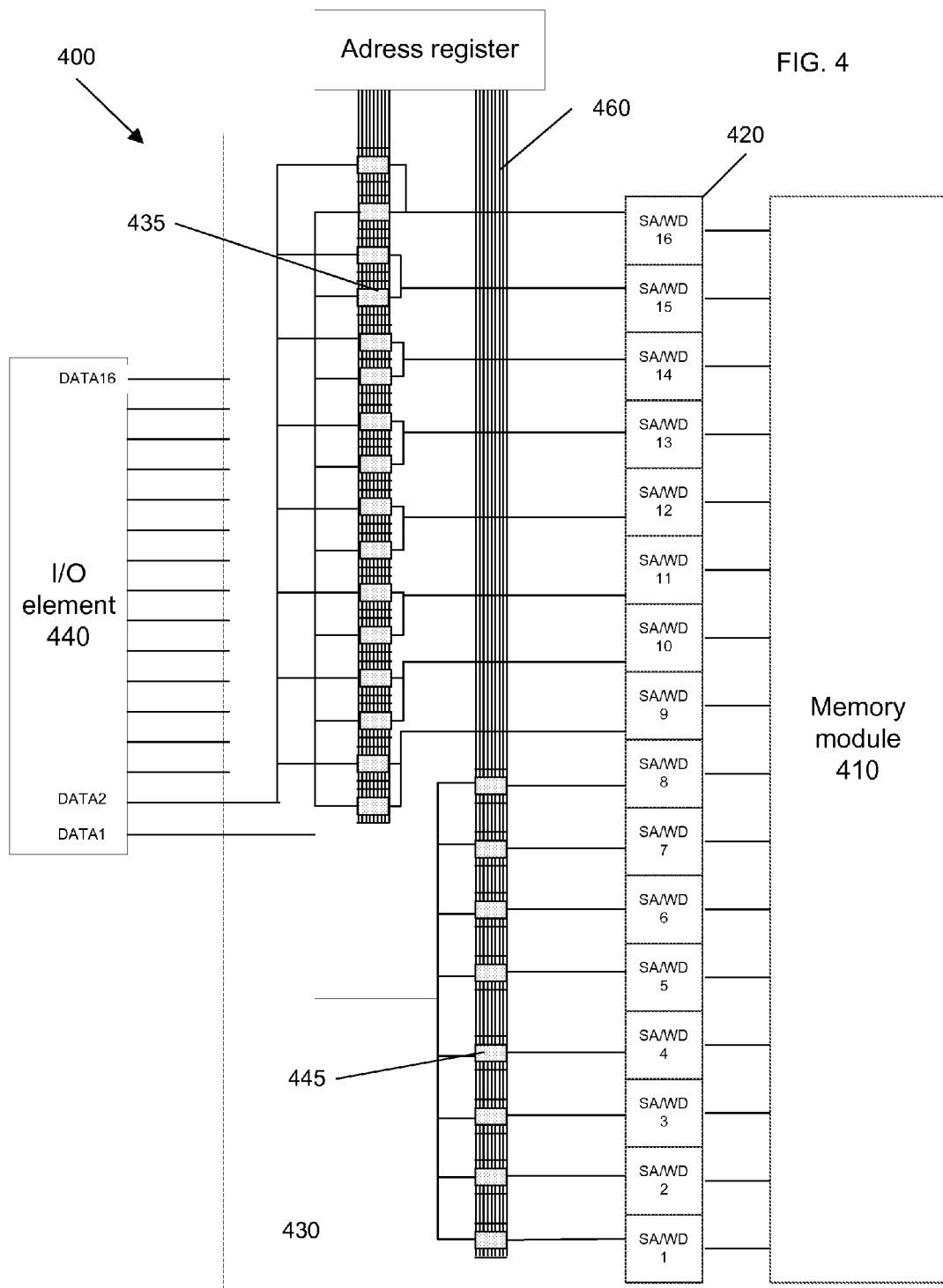
23 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets

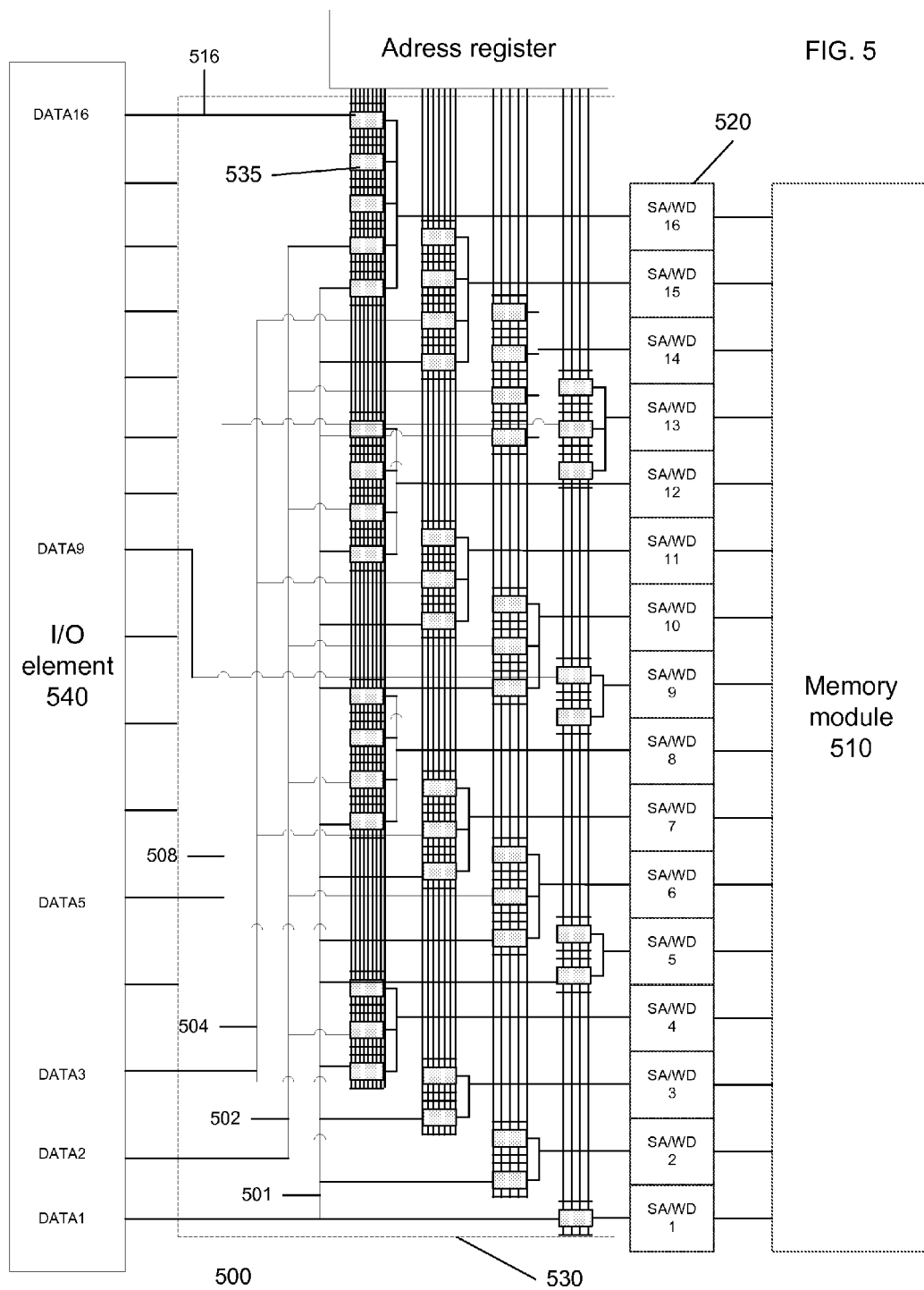


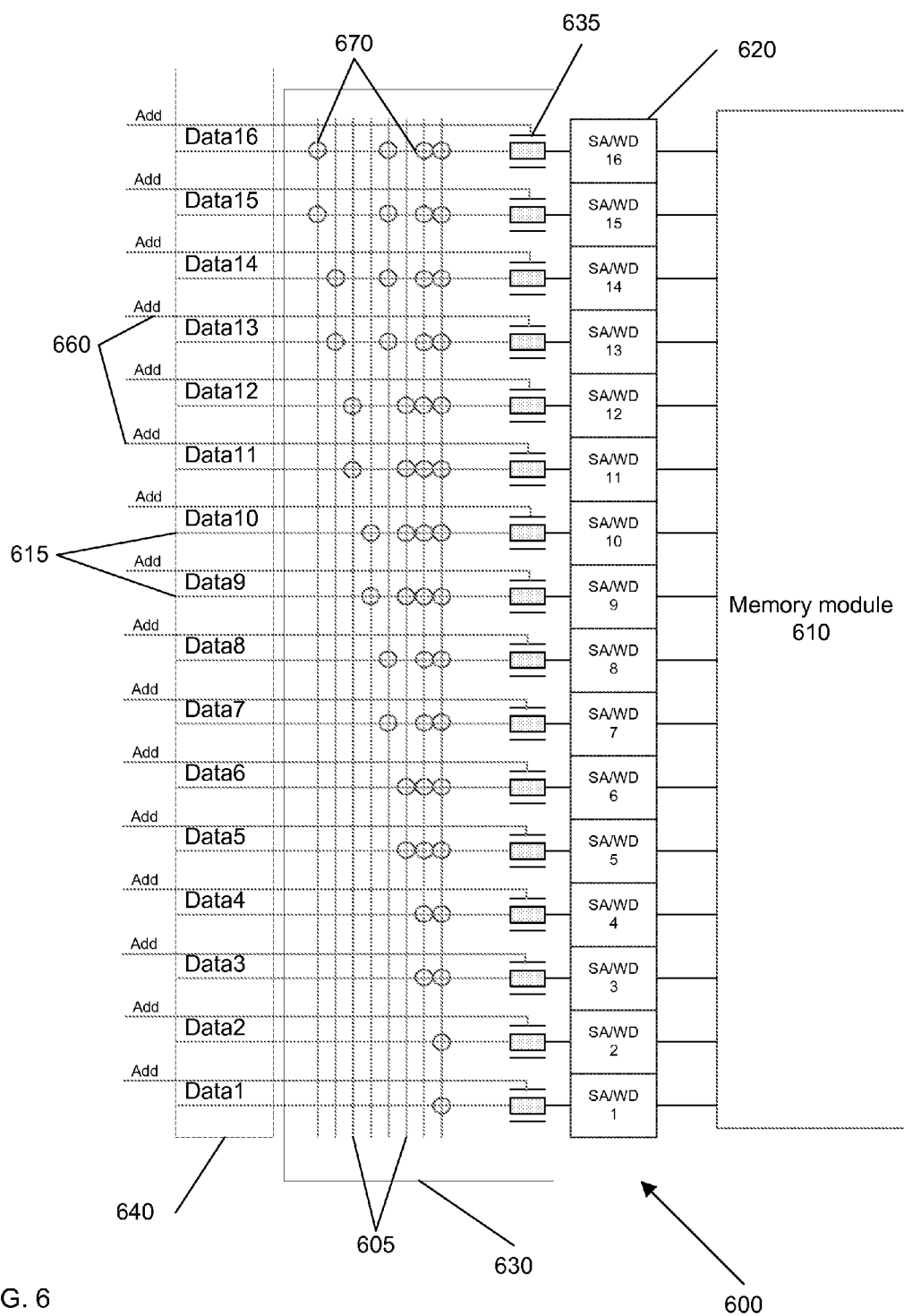


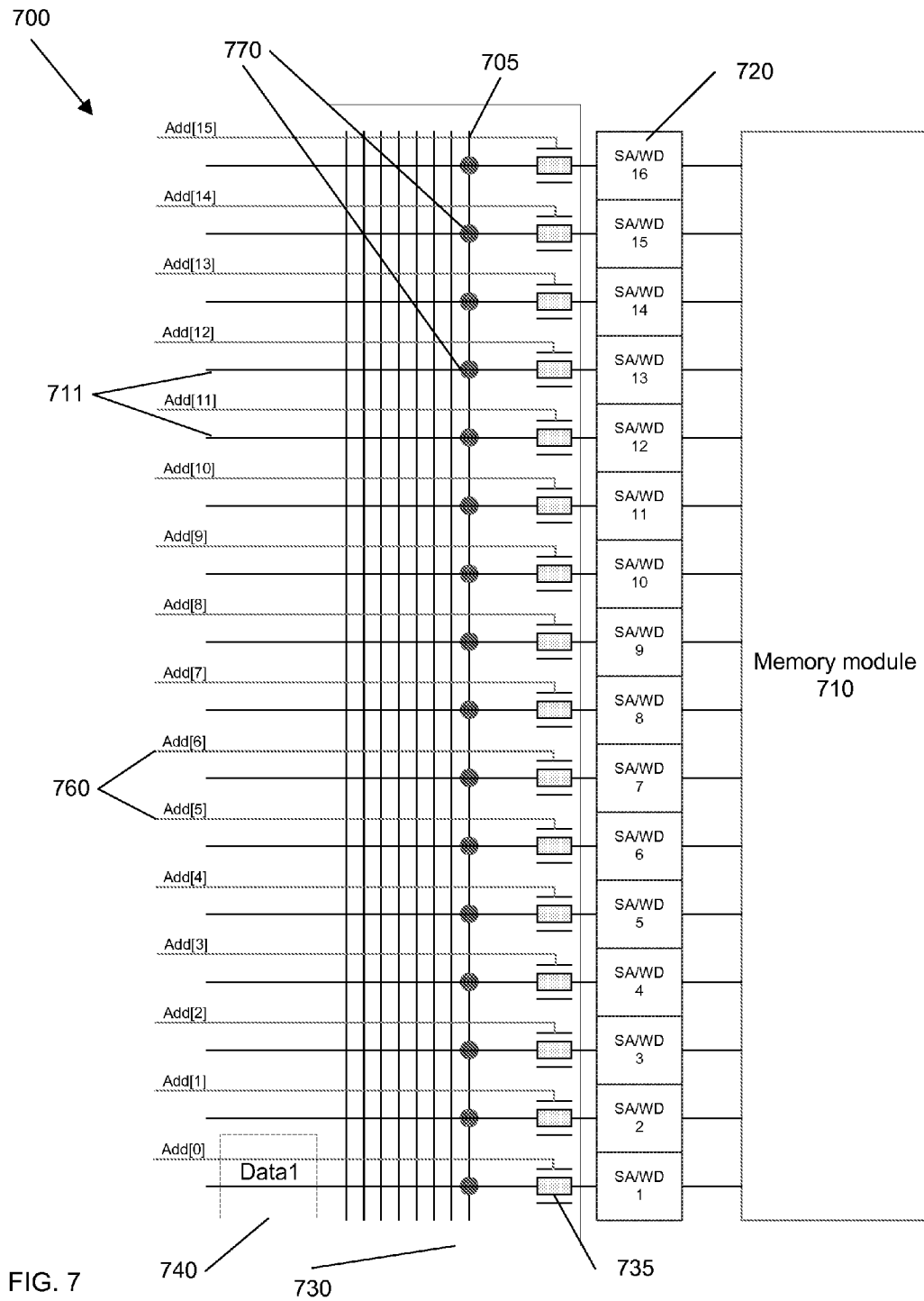


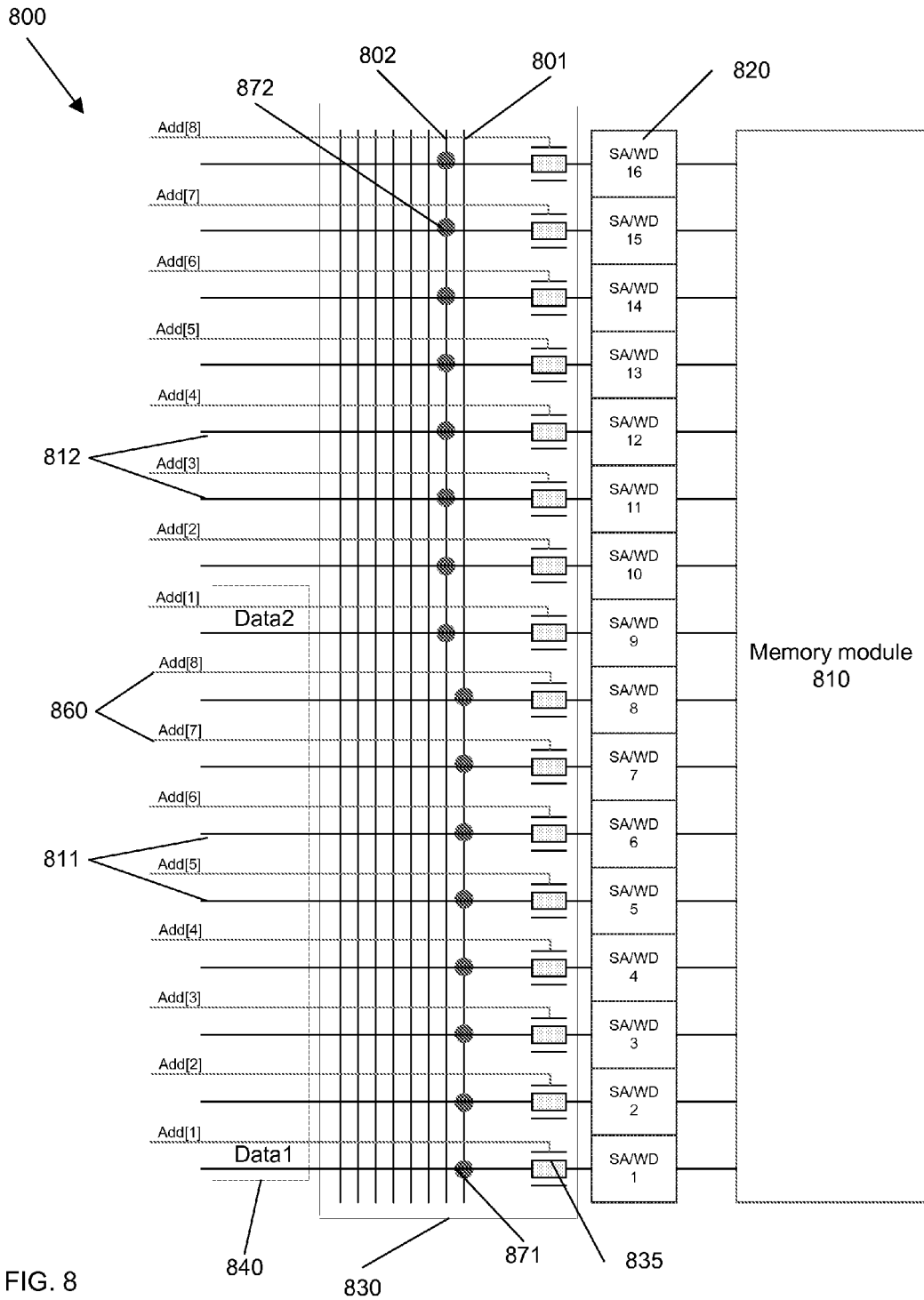












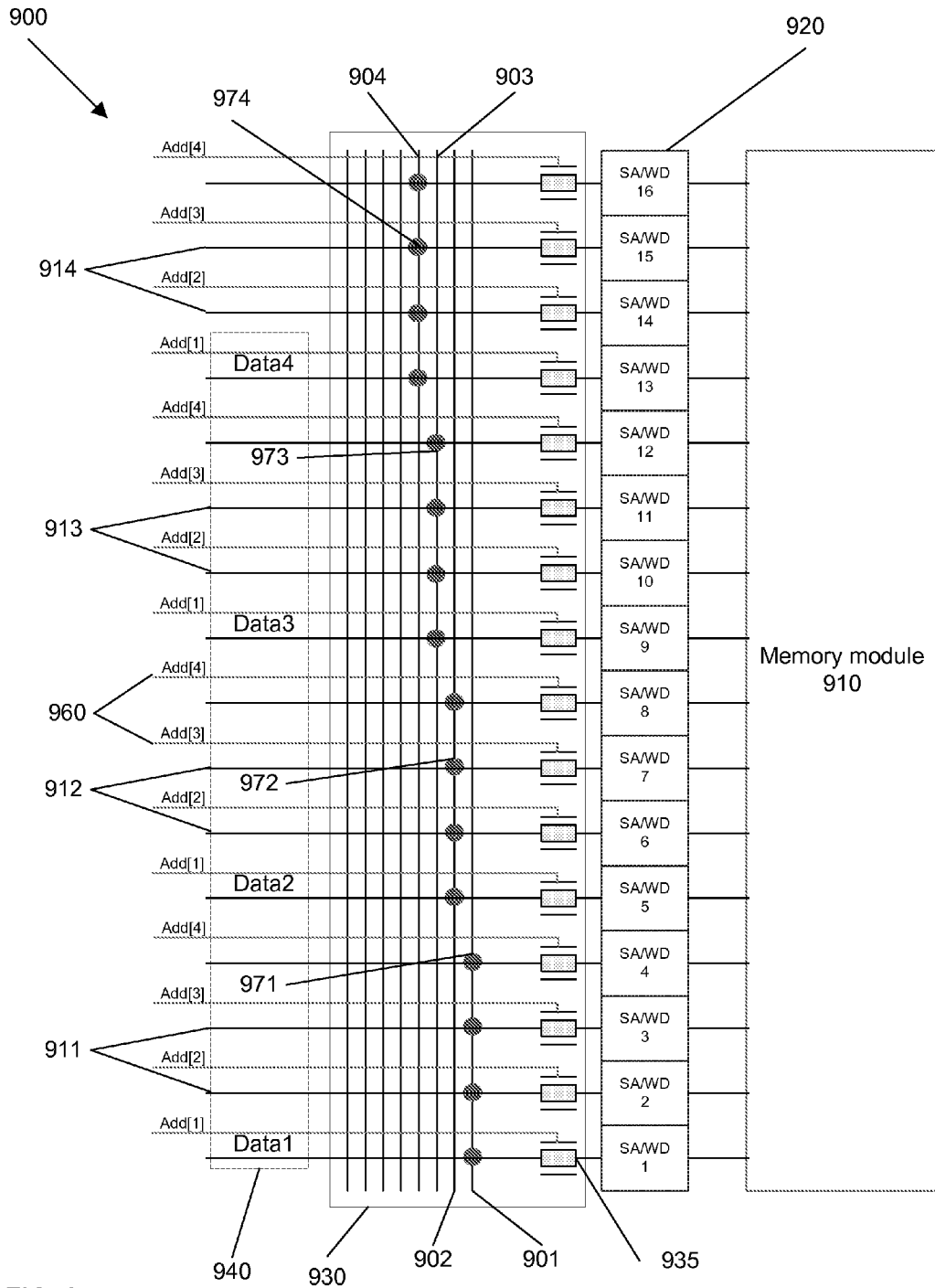


FIG. 9

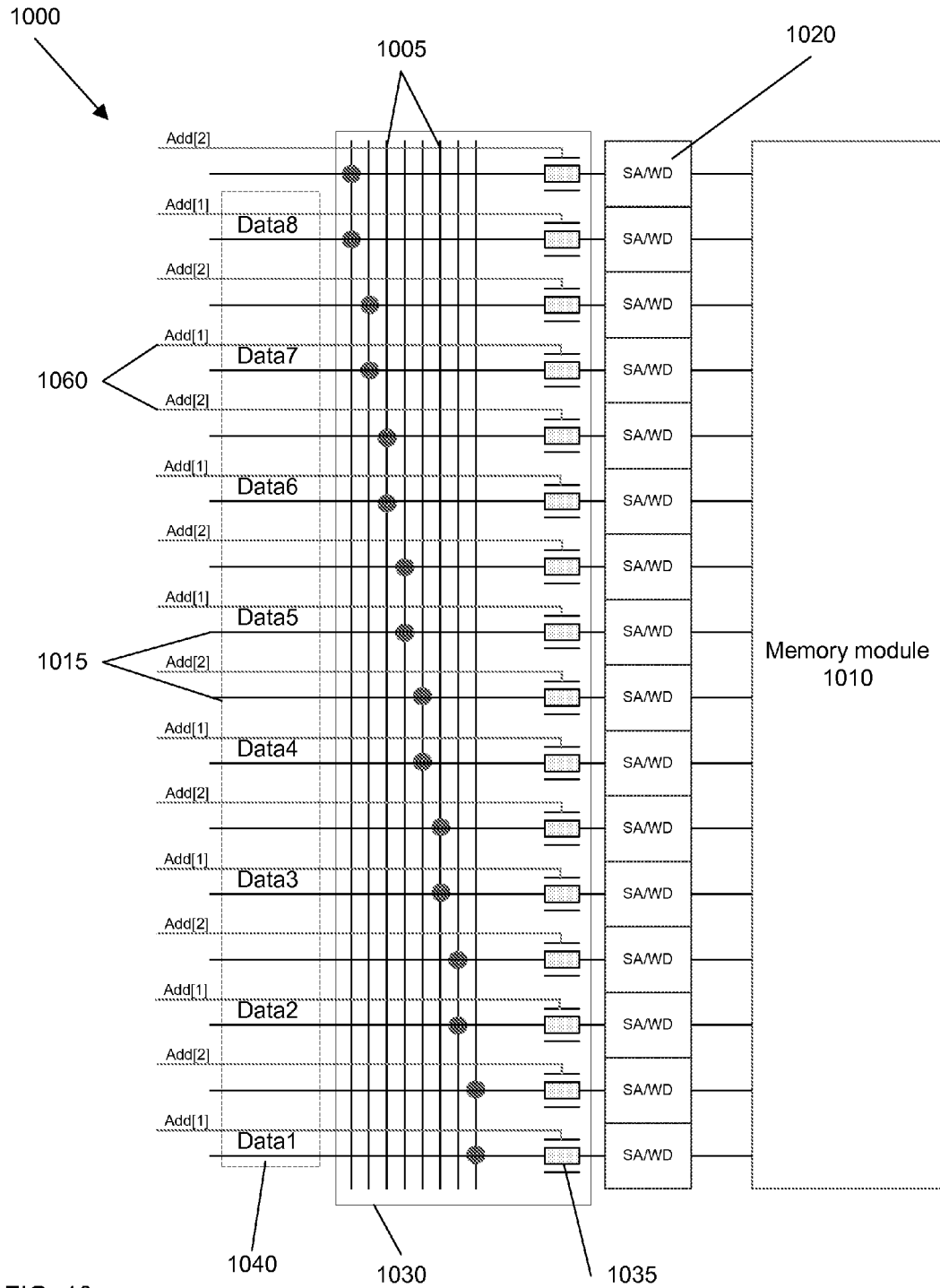
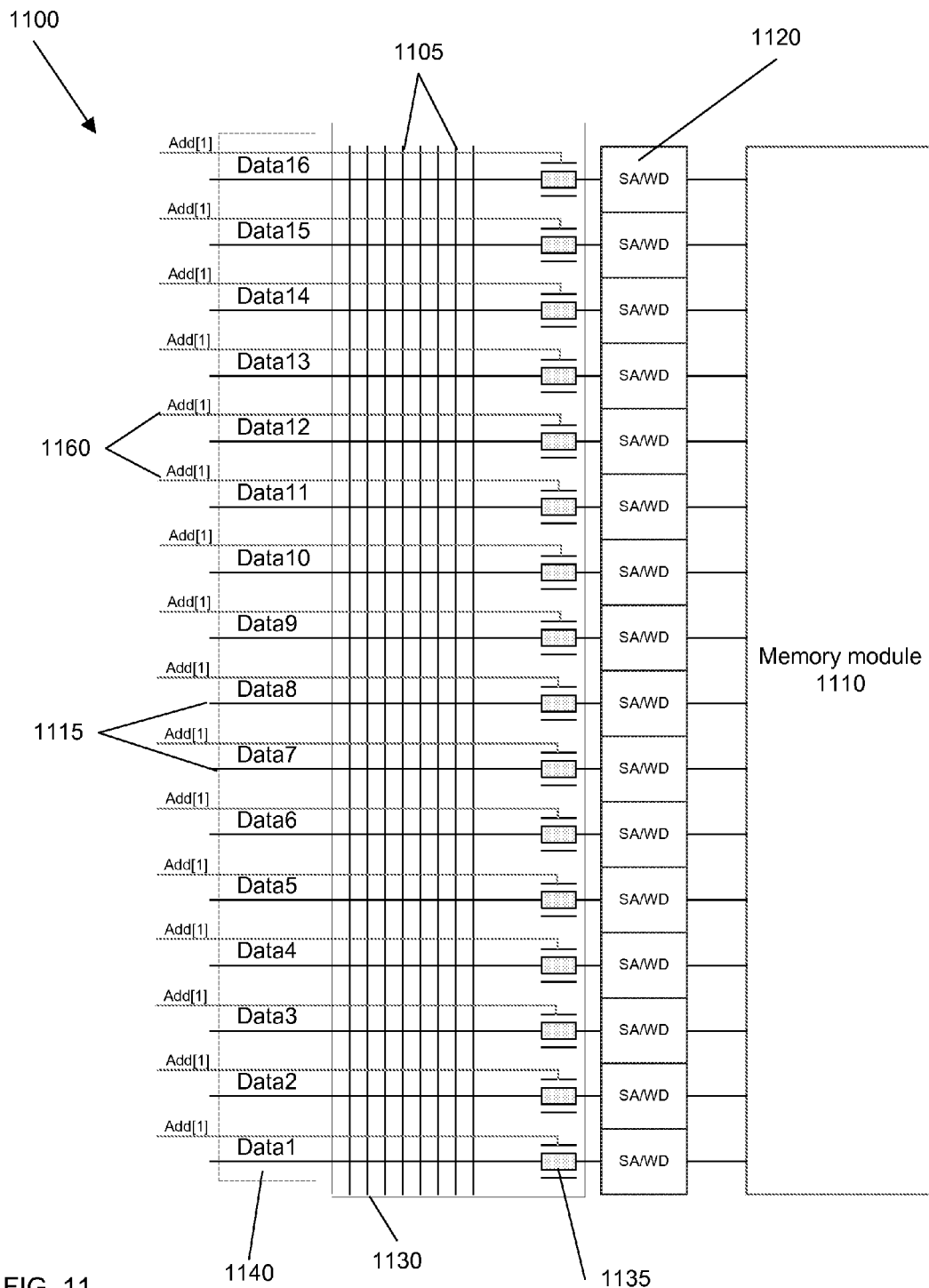


FIG. 10



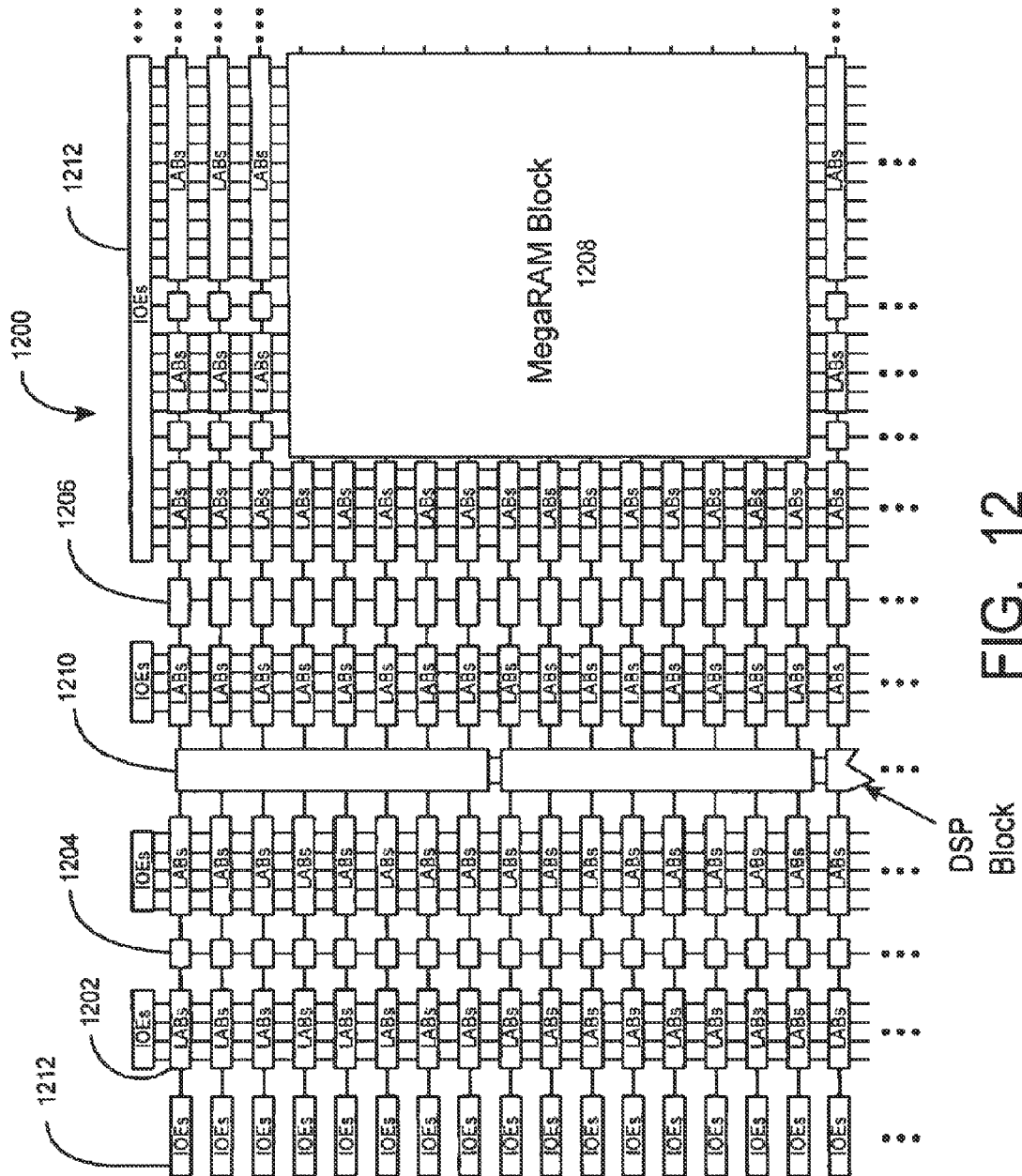


FIG. 12

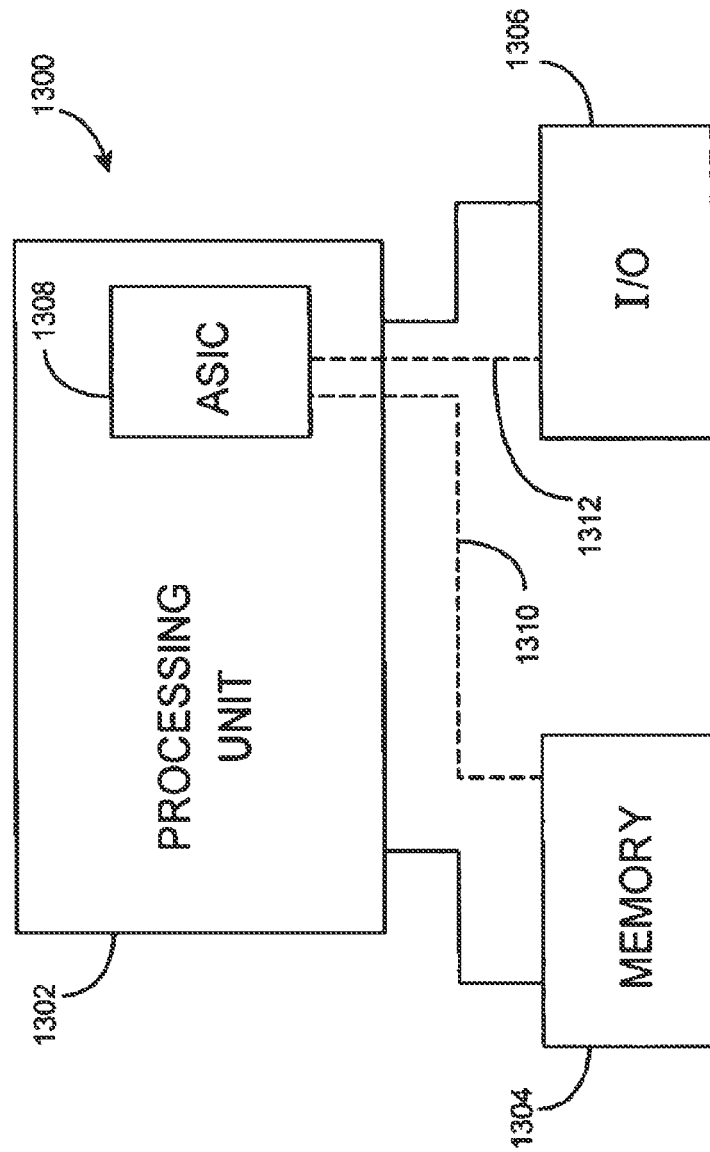


FIG. 13

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FPGA EQUIVALENT INPUT AND OUTPUT GRID MUXING ON STRUCTURAL ASIC MEMORY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/429,902, filed Apr. 24, 2009, which is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/405,807, filed Apr. 17, 2006, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,542,324, each of which is herein fully incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

This invention relates to switching or multiplexing structures for sending and retrieving variable amounts of data from memory or other circuit elements within integrated circuit devices. Devices of the type that are sometimes known as structured application-specific integrated circuits ("structured ASICs") may particularly benefit.

A possible use of structured ASIC technology is to produce ASICs that are functionally equivalent to programmed field-programmable gate arrays ("FPGAs"). After a logic design has been adequately "proven" in an FPGA, the design may be "migrated" to a structured ASIC. Structured ASICs offer several key performance advantages over FPGAs, primarily in the areas of power reduction, clock performance, manufacturing costs, and core density. A potential competing concern that might reduce such benefits of the migration from an FPGA to an ASIC is maintaining equivalent functionality between the ASIC and the FPGA.

For instance, in many FPGA devices, it is desirable for the memory to be designed to support multiple bus width configurations. To support the multiple bus width configurations, the FPGA requires large multiplexing, or muxing, structures to handle the proper selection of data to be read from or written to memory. However, directly transferring the multiple bus width configurations from the FPGA to the corresponding ASIC would degrade performance by leading to a bigger layout area, a more complex design, and an increased loading on the input and output muxing paths.

Accordingly, when the FPGA has the flexibility of multiple bus width configurations, it is not desirable to directly transfer the multiple data bus width configurations from the FPGA to the corresponding ASIC. Such direct transferring would at least partially defeat the purpose of having an ASIC, which is designed to be smaller and faster than the FPGA.

It is therefore desirable to have a muxing structure within an ASIC that does not degrade performance and that can provide equivalent functionality to an FPGA having multiple bus width configurations.

SUMMARY

Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention provide circuits, methods, and apparatus directed to an integrated circuit having a memory interface that is configurable to have one of a multiple different bus widths. The memory interface is compact and transmits signals efficiently. In one embodiment, the memory interface has a first set of lines and a second set of lines. The first set of lines may be organized to have a first orientation and the second set of lines to have a second orientation. The first and second set of lines are arranged such that there are multiple locations at which a via may be placed to connect a line of the first set to a line of the second set. The

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placement of the vias determines the bus width of the memory interface. In one embodiment, there are a greater number of locations than vias that are placed.

One embodiment of the present invention has a number of switches, which may equal the maximum bus width available. Each switch may be coupled with a memory module, which may be done through a sensing amplifier and write driver. Each switch may also be coupled with a line of the first set of lines. In another embodiment, the placement of the vias couples together a group of lines of the first set. The number of lines in the group may be 2^N , where N is an integer. In some embodiments, the state of a switch may depend on control signals. The control signals may be formulated from values in an address register. In other embodiments, one or more first set of data lines are also coupled with a circuit element, which may be a data register.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates an I/O device including a muxing structure for sending or retrieving data.

FIG. 2 illustrates an I/O device including a schematic of a muxing structure with a configurable bus width.

FIG. 3 illustrates an I/O device including a schematic of a muxing structure where only certain bus widths are supported.

FIG. 4 illustrates an I/O device including a schematic of an optimized and shared muxing structure for bus widths X1 and X2.

FIG. 5 illustrates an I/O device including a schematic of an optimized and shared muxing structure for bus widths X1, X2, X4, X8, and X16 that is improved by incorporating an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 shows an I/O device including a muxing structure configurable to have one of multiple bus widths according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 shows an I/O device including a muxing structure configured to have a bus width of X1 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 shows an I/O device including a muxing structure configured to have a bus width of X2 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 shows an I/O device including a muxing structure configured to have a bus width of X4 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 shows an I/O device including a muxing structure configured to have a bus width of X8 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11 shows an I/O device including a muxing structure configured to have a bus width of X16 according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a simplified block diagram of an integrated circuit device that does benefit by incorporating embodiments of the present invention;

FIG. 13 is a block diagram of an electronic system that does benefit by incorporating embodiments of the present invention;

DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

Embodiments of the present invention are directed to methods and multiplexing (muxing) structures used, for example, to send data to or retrieve data from a memory module or other circuit element along data buses of different widths. Generally, the data is produced by a structured application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC). However, one skilled in the art will

appreciate that embodiments of the invention may be applied to other types of integrated circuits and that the transmission of data along the data bus need not involve a memory module.

FIG. 1 shows an I/O device **100** with a memory module **110** capable of transferring data up to sixteen bits (X16) at a time. Each bit is transmitted through one of sixteen sense amplifier/write drivers (SA/WD) **120**. During an operation of reading data from the memory module **110**, each SA/WD may load in a different bit of data from the memory module **110**. The data bits are then transmitted to a muxing structure (or memory interface) **130** for selecting which data bits are sent to which input ports of an I/O element **140** of the integrated circuit. In a similar fashion, for a write operation, data is received in the muxing structure **130** from the I/O element **140**. The muxing structure **130** then selects which data is sent to which SA/WDs.

For some circuits or parts of circuits, it may be desirable to have the I/O element **140** send or receive fewer than the maximum number bits (**16** in this example) during one time cycle. This reduction in bus width may be done to save resources, such as routing. For a one-bit read operation, the muxing structure **130** must choose which of the 16 bits in the SA/WDs **120** is sent to which port of the I/O element **140**. For a one-bit write operation, the muxing structure **130** must choose to which of the SA/WDs **120** to send the data bit from a port of the I/O element **140**. In the case where only one bit is sent at a time, the I/O element **140** may be scaled down to be only one bit in size. Thus, only the DATA1 port would be accessible. Similarly, in the case where two bits are read, the selection circuit must choose which two bits in the SA/WDs are sent to the proper two ports of the I/O element **140**.

The selection of the proper data bits is controlled by address data in the address register **150**. The address data is sent to the muxing structure **130** through address lines **160**. The address data corresponds to which data is requested.

Prototyping of the integrated circuit typically occurs when the integrated circuit is created from a programmed field-programmable gate array ("FPGA"). During prototyping, it may not be easy to know the number of data bits that are desired to be sent per time cycle. Thus, at this prototyping stage, it may be desirable for muxing structure **130** to be able to send different amounts of data between the memory module **110** and the I/O element **140**. Such configurations are termed multiple bus width configurations.

FIG. 2 shows one I/O device **200** capable of multiple bus width configurations. The muxing structure **230** is made of sixteen switches **235** for each SA/WD **220**. For convenience, only the switches corresponding to the top and bottom SA/WD are shown, and not all of the switches for the bottom SA/WD are depicted. In FIG. 2, the muxing structure **230** is denoted with dashed lines.

The switches **235** may be a pass gate, a multiplexer, or other such selection device. Each switch **235** controls whether the data bit, from the SA/WD to which the switch is connected, is sent to the port of the I/O element **240** to which it is connected. Whether the data bit is sent depends on the data signals on the address lines **260**. This configuration could handle any data bus width of X1-X16.

As an example, for an X8 bus width, the address lines **260** may select the switches **235** such that the data bits in the SA/WDs labeled **9-16** are sent to the respective DATA1-DATA8 ports of the I/O element **240**. Alternatively, for an X4 bus width, the address lines **260** may select the switches **235** such that the data bits in any four SA/WDs are coupled respectively to the DATA1, DATA6, DATA9, and DATA 14 ports of the I/O element **240**. Any such configuration is possible since every SA/WD **220** is connected to DATA port.

However, this is not very efficient as there are 256 switches. Muxing structure **230** takes up a lot of space, and the number of address lines **260** is large.

To further illustrate other multiple bus width configurations, FIG. 3 illustrates an I/O device **300** with fewer switches. FIG. 3 shows a configuration for the muxing structure **330** such that only the bus widths of X1 and X2 are supported. For convenience, only bus widths of X1 and X2 are shown. Typically, five bus widths of X1, X2, X4, X8, and X16 would be supported. By providing for only five different bus widths, the number of switches is decreased to 80 and the number of address lines is also decreased since only five sets of vertical address lines **360** are required.

In FIG. 3, the switches **335** and **345** are grouped such that all of the switches associated with the same bus width lie in the same vertical column. Although switches associated with the same bus width lie on the same set of address lines **360**, this is not required. The column of switches **345** on the right are associated with the X1 bus width. Each switch **345** is coupled to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **340**. The column of switches **335a** and **335b** on the left are associated with the X2 bus width. The bottom eight switches **335a** are coupled to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **340**, and the top eight switches **335b** are coupled to the DATA2 port. For the X2 bus width, the data bound for DATA2 must be in a prescribed set of SA/WDs, but in practicality no flexibility is lost.

Similar organization of the switches may be made for other bus widths. For the X4 bus width, SA/WDs labeled **1-4** may be associated with switches coupled to DATA1; SA/WDs **5-8** may be associated with switches coupled to DATA2; SA/WDs **9-12** may be associated with switches coupled to DATA3; and SA/WDs **13-16** may be associated with switches coupled to DATA4. In this manner, there are 16 switches per bus width, which gives the total number of switches as 80.

Illustrating another multiple bus width configuration. FIG. 4 shows an I/O device **400** that supports bus widths X1 and X2. In muxing structure **430**, the left vertical line of switches **435** along a set of address lines **460** may be shared among the two bus widths. In FIG. 4, the eight SA/WDs **420** labeled **9-16** are coupled to groups of two switches each. One of each of these two switches is coupled to the DATA1 port of I/O element **440**. This coupling allows these switches and the associated SA/WDs to support an X1 bus width. The rest of the support for the X1 bus width comes from the bottom right eight switches **445**.

The other of the groups of switches **435** is coupled to the DATA2 port of I/O element **440**. This coupling allows these switches and the associated SA/WD to support an X2 bus width. The rest of the support for the X2 bus width comes from the bottom right eight switches **445**. The configuration of the muxing structure **430** reuses the switches **445** for the X1 bus width for larger bus widths. In this manner, eight switches have been effectively removed while maintaining the same flexibility of having multiple bus width configurations.

FIG. 5 shows an I/O device **500** adopting the basic shared muxing structure in FIG. 4 while supporting five widths of X1, X2, X4, X8, and X16. The muxing structure **530** takes advantage of the fact that not every SA/WD **520** needs to have data going to every DATA port of the I/O element **540**.

To support the X1 bus width, every SA/WD **520** is coupled to a switch **535** that is coupled to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **540**. Line **501** couples 16 switches to the DATA1 port. To support the X2 bus width, the eight SA/WDs **520** labeled with even numbers are coupled to a switch that is coupled to the DATA2 port of the I/O element **540**. Line **502** couples these 8 switches to the DATA2 port. The other eight

SA/WDs labeled with odd numbers continue to be connected to the DATA1 port during operation with the X2 data bus width. Since all of the SA/WDs 520 are coupled to the DATA1 port, it is possible for the odd SA/WDs to still transmit data to and from the DATA 1 port.

To support the X4 bus width, four SA/WDs labeled 3, 7, 11, and 15 are coupled to a switch that is coupled to the DATA3 port of the I/O element 540. Line 504 couples these 4 switches to the DATA3 port. The DATA4 port may be coupled to four SA/WDs labeled 4, 8, 12, and 16. For convenience, these connections are not shown. In one configuration, the SA/WDs labeled 2, 6, 10, and 14 remain coupled to the DATA2 port and may be used to transfer data to this port in an X4 bus width configuration. The SA/WDs labeled 1, 5, 9, and 13 remain coupled to the DATA1 port and may be used to transfer data to this port in an X4 bus width configuration.

To support the X8 bus width, two SA/WDs 520 labeled 5 and 13 are coupled to a switch that is coupled to the DATA5 port of the I/O element 540. Line 508 couples these 2 switches to the DATA5 port. To support the X16 bus width, the DATA9-DATA16 ports of the I/O element 540 are coupled to a single switch that is respectively coupled to SA/WDs labeled 9-16. For example, line 516 couples the DATA 16 port to a switch that is coupled to SA/WD 16.

The total number of switches used by I/O device 500 is reduced to 48 switches. However, the number of routing and address connections is still large, and the number of switches is not insignificant. This is true particularly when the circuit is taken from an FPGA to a structured ASIC. The benefits of greater speed and smaller size provided by an ASIC design would be compromised with the muxing structure in I/O device 500.

Embodiments of the present invention take advantage of the fact that the design of the FPGA is already established when it is migrated to an ASIC. Thus, when the FPGA is transferred to the ASIC, the width of each data bus associated with each memory module is known. This knowledge of the data bus widths allows smaller and more efficient muxing structures to be employed within the ASIC. Additionally, since each memory module may have a different bus width associated with it, each bus width of the ASIC needs to be easily configured to a fixed size taken from the possible bus widths.

To this end, FIG. 6 shows I/O device 600 according to an embodiment of the invention. The I/O device 600 may be part of a larger integrated circuit and is capable of being configured to have any fixed bus width between X1-X16. In some embodiments, the bus width is a power of two, i.e. 2^N , but any value is possible.

In FIG. 6, the memory module 610 is connected to sixteen SA/WDs 620. The memory module may be many memory cells formed in an array, and may be CDRAM, EDRAM, MRAM, DRAM, SDRAM, registers, FIFO buffers, or any other suitable type of memory or circuit element capable of storing a data bit. The SA/WDs 620 may be any device that strobes the memory module 610 during a clock cycle to read or write one or more bits of data. The SA/WDs 620 also may be incorporated into the memory module 610.

Muxing structure 630 transfers data bits between the SA/WDs 620 and I/O element 640 and is shown with a dotted line. Within muxing structure 630, there are 16 switches 635, each connected through a data signal line to one SA/WD 620. The switches 635 may be a pass gate, a multiplexer, or other such selection device. In one embodiment, the muxing structure 630 could include the SA/WDs 620.

A control signal along an address line 660 is connected to each switch 635 which controls whether the switch is open or

not. As will be explained below, the address lines 660 may be connected to each other depending on the configuration. In some embodiments, the control signals along the address lines 660 are coupled to an address register. In other embodiments, the control signals may be attached to functional logic, clock circuitry, or external devices. Also, the muxing structure 630 may or may not include the address lines 660.

The vertical connector lines 605 and the horizontal I/O data signal lines 615 reside on different layers of the ASIC. In some embodiments, all of the lines 605 reside in one layer, and all of the lines 615 reside in another layer. In other embodiments, lines 605 may reside in different layers, and the lines 605 may reside in different layers. The use of horizontal and vertical lines is purely illustrative as each line may have any orientation. The I/O lines 615 connect an SA/WD to the I/O element 640. The I/O lines 615 may be connected to any of the DATA ports of an I/O element 640. For example in FIG. 6, the DATA port is coupled to SA/WD labeled 1; the DATA2 port is coupled to SA/WD labeled 2; and the other ports are similarly coupled. However, the order could be reversed, or the order could be random. The I/O element 640 may transmit the data to other parts of the integrated circuit. The I/O element may be a register, a buffer, functional logic, or one or more other circuit elements.

The circles 670 correspond to possible places where a via, electrical connection, may be made from a connector line 605 to an I/O line 615. Thus, each I/O line 615 may be electrically connected to each connector line 605. In practice, each I/O line 615 will only be electrically connected to one vertical line 605. The vias are placed to couple certain SA/WDs 620 together. Aspects of the invention will be more clear with the following figures showing embodiments configured for X1, X2, X4, X8, and X16 bus widths.

This embodiment allows for an automatic configuration of the bus width due to the preset steps of placing the vias for configuring the bus width. Although the configuration may be done manually, the automation of this procedure makes for an efficient chip design and manufacture.

FIG. 7 shows an example of an I/O device 700 configured for an X1 (one-bit) data bus width according to an embodiment of the invention. Muxing structure 730 is shown with a dotted line. During a read operation in this embodiment, one bit of data is sent from the memory module 710 to each of the SA/WDs 720. Correspondingly, during a write operation for this embodiment, one bit of data is sent from only one SA/WDs 720 to the memory module 710. Read and write operations could be based on one edge of a clock signal, both edges, a strobe signal, or other type of suitable signal. The SA/WDs 720 may be part of the memory module, part of a muxing structure, or separate devices.

Each SA/WD 720 is connected to one of the switches 735. Whether each switch 735 is in an open or closed state is controlled by one of the address lines 760. For this X1 embodiment, only one switch is open during any one I/O operation. Each switch is also connected to one of the I/O data signal lines 711. Each I/O line 711 is electrically connected to the same vertical connector line 705, e.g. by a via 770. Thus, each switch 735 and each SA/WD 720 is coupled to the DATA1 port of I/O element 740.

Accordingly, in this embodiment, the data bit only travels to and from the DATA1 port of the I/O element 740. As mentioned above, the address signals 760 control which data bit travels to or from the 16 SA/WDs 720. For example, during a read operation, if the 8th SA/WD was chosen, then the corresponding switch would be opened as controlled by the address signals 760. The data bit would travel from the switch along the corresponding line 711 to the electrical

connection between I/O line **711** and the connector line **705**. The data signal will travel then along the connector line **705** and will reach the lowermost I/O line which is electrically connected to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **740**.

In this embodiment, regardless of which data bit from one of the SA/WDs is chosen, the data will be sent out to DATA1 since each one of the horizontal lines **711** that is connected to one of the switches **735** is connected the DATA1 port.

FIG. **8** shows an example of an I/O device **800** configured for an X2 (two-bit) data bus width according to an embodiment of the invention. The construction of I/O device **800** is similar to that of I/O device **700**. Muxing structure **830** is shown with a dotted line. There are sixteen SA/WDs **820** connected to the memory module **810**. There are sixteen switches **835**, each of which is connected to one SA/WD, and there are I/O lines **811** and **812** connected to the other end of each switch. In some embodiments, all of the I/O lines **811** and **812** may be connected to the I/O element **840**, and in other embodiments only some of the I/O lines are connected to I/O element **840** while the rest may be terminated.

However in I/O device **800**, all of the SA/WDs **820** are not coupled to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **840**. The I/O lines **812** from the SA/WDs labeled **9-16** are each electrically connected through vias **872** to vertical connector line **802**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **9-16** are coupled to the DATA2 port of the I/O element **840**. Which I/O line **812** is connected to the DATA1 port may vary. The I/O lines **811** from the SA/WDs labeled **1-8** are each electrically connected through vias **871** to vertical connector line **801**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **1-8** are coupled to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **840**. Which eight SA/WDs are coupled to which DATA ports may vary according to any pattern. For example, the odd SA/WDs may be coupled to the DATA1 port and the even SA/WDs may be coupled to the DATA2 port.

The address lines **860** control which of the switches **835** are opened to transmit or receive a data bit. The eight address lines for DATA1 and the eight address lines for DATA2 may have the same values, or equivalently be electrically connected. For example, if add[1] is selected then the bits from SA/WDs labeled **1** and **9** are respectively coupled to the DATA1 and DATA 2 ports. Alternatively, the eight address lines for DATA1 and the eight address lines for DATA2 may be uncorrelated. For example, add[5] may be selected for the DATA2 port, which would couple SA/WD labeled **13**, and add[2] may be selected for the DATA1 port, which would couple SA/WD labeled **2**.

FIG. **9** shows an example of an I/O device **900** configured for an X4 (four-bit) data bus width according to an embodiment of the invention. The construction of I/O device **900** is similar to that of I/O device **700**. Muxing structure **930** is shown with a dotted line. There are sixteen SA/WDs **920** connected to the memory module **910**. There are sixteen switches **935**, each of which is connected to one SA/WD, and there are I/O lines **911**, **912**, **913**, and **914** connected to the other end of each switch.

The I/O lines **914** from the SA/WDs labeled **13-16** are each electrically connected through vias **974** to vertical connector line **904**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **13-16** are coupled to the DATA4 port of the I/O element **940**. The I/O lines **913** from the SA/WDs labeled **9-12** are each electrically connected through vias **973** to vertical connector line **903**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **9-12** are coupled to the DATA3 port of the I/O element **940**.

The I/O lines **912** from the SA/WDs labeled **5-8** are each electrically connected through vias **972** to vertical connector line **902**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **5-8** are coupled to the DATA2 port of the I/O element **940**. The I/O lines **911** from

the SA/WDs labeled **1-4** are each electrically connected through vias **971** to vertical connector line **901**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **1-4** are coupled to the DATA1 port of the I/O element **940**. The address lines **960** control which of the switches **935** are opened to transmit or receive a data bit.

FIG. **10** shows an example of an I/O device **1000** configured for an X8 (eight-bit) data bus width according to an embodiment of the invention. The construction of I/O device **1000** is similar to that of I/O device **900**. Muxing structure **1030** is shown in a dotted line. There are sixteen SA/WDs **1020** connected to the memory module **1010**. There are sixteen switches **1035**, each of which is connected to one SA/WD. The address lines **1060** control which of the switches **1035** are opened to transmit or receive a data bit.

The I/O lines **1015** from the SA/WDs labeled **15-16** are each electrically connected together through one of the vertical connector lines **1005**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **15-16** are coupled to the DATA8 port of the I/O element **1040**. The I/O lines **1015** from the SA/WDs labeled **13-14** are each electrically connected together through another of the vertical connector lines **1005**. Thus, SA/WDs labeled **13-14** are coupled to the DATA7. Similarly, the SA/WDs labeled **11-12** are coupled to the DATA6 port; SA/WDs labeled **9-10** are coupled to the DATA5 port; SA/WDs labeled **7-8** are coupled to the DATA4 port; SA/WDs labeled **5-6** are coupled to the DATA3 port; SA/WDs labeled **3-4** are coupled to the DATA2 port; and SA/WDs labeled **1-2** are coupled to the DATA1 port.

FIG. **11** shows an example of an I/O device **1100** configured for an X16 (sixteen-bit) data bus width according to an embodiment of the invention. Muxing structure **1130** is shown with a dotted line. There are sixteen SA/WDs **1120** connected to the memory module **1110**. There are sixteen switches **1135**, each of which is connected to one SA/WD. The address lines **1160** control which of the switches **1135** are opened to transmit or receive a data bit.

In this embodiment, none of the I/O lines **1115** are electrically connected to any of the vertical connector lines **1105**. Each SA/WD is coupled to one DATA port of the I/O element **1140**. In FIG. **11**, SA/WD labeled **16** is couple to DATA16 port of the I/O element **1140**, and every other SA/WD is similarly coupled to a respective DATA port. The exact arrangement of coupling may be ordered as shown in FIG. **11**, in reverse ordering, or of any arrangement ordered or random.

In summary, the connector lines electrically connect groups of switches, and the corresponding SA/WD of each switch, so that each group contributes one bit to the overall bus width. Thus, each group sends one bit to an I/O circuit element within an integrated circuit. The switches control which bit within each group is sent. Accordingly, FIGS. **7-11** show embodiments of an I/O device with a grid-like muxing structure that may be configured to have any data bus width. Although FIGS. **7-11** show embodiments with an even number of groups of switches connected together, other embodiments may have an odd number of groups of switches connected together. Such an arrangement can give any size bus width up to a set maximum. The control or address signals can still ensure access of the proper data in such an odd arrangement. Also, the lines in FIGS. **7-11** can be metal, polysilicon, or a diffused or implanted region in silicon, such as a source/drain region. These lines (interconnects) can be connected using vias or contacts, as appropriate.

FIG. **12** is a simplified partial block diagram of an exemplary high-density structured ASIC or programmable logic device **1200** wherein techniques according to the present invention can be utilized. PLD **1200** includes a two-dimensional array of programmable logic array blocks (or LABs) **1202** that are interconnected by a network of column and row

interconnections of varying length and speed. When the PLD or FPGA is migrated to an ASIC, the LABs **1202** may be replaced by function specific logic elements. LABs **1202** include multiple (e.g., **10**) logic elements (or LEs), an LE being a small unit of logic that provides for efficient implementation of user defined logic functions.

PLD **1200** also includes a distributed memory structure including RAM blocks of varying sizes provided throughout the array. The RAM blocks include, for example, 512 bit blocks **1204**, 4K blocks **1206** and an M-Block **1208** providing 512K bits of RAM. These memory blocks may also include shift registers and FIFO buffers. PLD **1200** further includes digital signal processing (DSP) blocks **1210** that can implement, for example, multipliers with add or subtract features.

It is to be understood that PLD **1200** is described herein for illustrative purposes only and that the present invention can be implemented in many different types of PLDs, FPGAs, structured ASICs and the other types of digital integrated circuits.

While PLDs of the type shown in FIG. **12** provide many of the resources required to implement system level solutions, the present invention can also benefit systems wherein a PLD is one of several components. FIG. **13** shows a block diagram of an exemplary digital system **1300**, within which the present invention may be embodied. System **1300** can be a programmed digital computer system, digital signal processing system, specialized digital switching network, or other processing system. Moreover, such systems may be designed for a wide variety of applications such as telecommunications systems, automotive systems, control systems, consumer electronics, personal computers, electronic displays, Internet communications and networking, and others. Further, system **1300** may be provided on a single board, on multiple boards, or within multiple enclosures.

System **1300** includes a processing unit **1302**, a memory unit **1304** and an I/O unit **1306** interconnected together by one or more buses. According to this exemplary embodiment, a programmable logic device (PLD) **1308** is embedded in processing unit **1302**. PLD **1308** may serve many different purposes within the system in FIG. **13**. PLD **1308** can, for example, be a logical building block of processing unit **1302**, supporting its internal and external operations. PLD **1308** is programmed to implement the logical functions necessary to carry on its particular role in system operation. PLD **1308** may be specially coupled to memory **1304** through connection **1310** and to I/O unit **1306** through connection **1312**.

Processing unit **1302** may direct data to an appropriate system component for processing or storage, execute a program stored in memory **1304** or receive and transmit data via I/O unit **1306**, or other similar function. Processing unit **1302** can be a central processing unit (CPU), microprocessor, floating point coprocessor, graphics coprocessor, hardware controller, microcontroller, programmable logic device programmed for use as a controller, network controller, and the like. Furthermore, in many embodiments, there is often no need for a CPU.

For example, instead of a CPU, one or more PLD **1308** can control the logical operations of the system. In an embodiment, PLD **1308** acts as a reconfigurable processor, which can be reprogrammed as needed to handle a particular computing task. Alternately, programmable logic device **1308** may itself include an embedded microprocessor. Memory unit **1304** may be a random access memory (RAM), read only memory (ROM), fixed or flexible disk media, PC Card flash disk memory, tape, or any other storage means, or any combination of these storage means.

Embodiments of the present invention may be used to improve circuits that interface with the memory unit **1304**. While embodiments of the present invention particularly benefit these interface circuits when digital integrated circuit **1308** is an ASIC, embodiments may benefit other integrated circuits using multiple data bus widths.

The above description of exemplary embodiments of the invention has been presented for the purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form described, and many modifications and variations are possible in light of the teaching above. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical applications to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for operating a device having a configurable bus width, the method comprising:

receiving data comprising a plurality of bits;

coupling a first set of data lines corresponding to a first portion of the plurality of bits to a first one bit wide output of the device through a first set of vias associated with the first set of data lines, wherein a first data line of the first set of data lines is coupled to the first one bit wide output through a first via of the first set of vias and a second data line of the first set of data lines is coupled to the first one bit wide output through a second via of the first set of vias; and

selectively controlling which bit of the first portion is coupled to the first set of data lines based on a placement of the first via or the second via.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

coupling a second set of data lines corresponding to a second portion of the plurality of bits to a second one bit wide output of the device through a second set of vias associated with the second set of data lines.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising selectively controlling which bit of the second portion is coupled to the second set of data lines using identical control signals used to selectively control which bit of the first portion is coupled to the first set of data lines.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein selectively controlling comprises:

coupling each of a plurality of bits of the first portion to a respective one of a plurality of switches that are each coupled to the first set of data lines; and

applying control signals to each respective switch, wherein a first switch of the plurality of switches outputs one of the plurality of bits of the first portion coupled to the first switch responsive to selection of the first switch.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein an output of each of the plurality of switches is coupled to the first set of data lines through a respective one of the first set of vias.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein the control signals are received from an address register.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the bus width is inversely proportional to a number of vias in the first set of vias that is associated with the first set of lines.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the device includes a plurality of physical layers, wherein the first set of data lines are on a first of the plurality of physical layers, wherein the first one bit wide output is on a second of the plurality of physical layers, and wherein the set of vias form physical connections between the first layer and the second layer.

9. A device having a configurable bus width, the device comprising:

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input circuitry configured to receive a plurality of bits;
 routing circuitry comprising a first set of data lines corresponding to a first portion of the plurality of bits and a first set of vias associated with the first set of data lines, wherein the routing circuitry is configured to couple the first set of data lines to a first one bit wide output of the device through the first set of vias, and wherein a first of the first set of data lines is coupled to the first one bit wide output through a first of the first set of vias and a second of the first set of data lines is coupled to the first one bit wide output through a second of the first set of vias; and

selection circuitry configured to receive the first portion of the plurality of bits and to selectively control which bit of the first portion is coupled to the first set of data lines based on a placement of the first via or the second via.

10. The device of claim 9, wherein the circuit is a multiplexing structure and the plurality of bits are output from memory circuitry.

11. The device of claim 9, wherein the routing circuitry further comprises:

a second set of data lines corresponding to a second portion of the plurality of bits; and

a second set of vias associated with the second set of data lines, wherein the routing circuitry is further configured to couple the second set of data lines to a second one bit wide output of the device through the second set of vias.

12. The device of claim 11, wherein the selection circuitry is further configured to selectively control which bit of the second portion is coupled to the second set of data lines using identical control signals used to selectively control which bit of the first portion is coupled to the first set of data lines.

13. The device of claim 9, wherein the selection circuitry comprises a plurality of switches, and wherein the selection circuitry is further configured to:

couple each of a plurality of bits of the first portion to a respective one of the plurality of switches that are each coupled to the first set of data lines; and

apply control signals to each respective switch, wherein a first switch of the plurality of switches outputs one of the plurality of bits of the first portion coupled to the first switch responsive to selection of the first switch.

14. The device of claim 13, wherein an output of each of the plurality of switches is coupled to the first set of data lines through a respective one of the first set of vias.

15. The device of claim 13, wherein the control signals are received from an address register.

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16. The device of claim 9, wherein the bus width is inversely proportional to a number of vias in the first set of vias that is associated with the first set of lines.

17. The device of claim 9, wherein the selection circuitry comprises a plurality of transistors.

18. The device of claim 9, wherein the device includes a plurality of physical layers, wherein the first set of data lines are on a first of the plurality of physical layers, wherein the first one bit wide output is on a second of the plurality of physical layers, and wherein the set of vias form physical connections between the first layer and the second layer.

19. A system having a configurable bus width, the system comprising:

an address register configured to output address signals;

a memory module configured to output a plurality of data bits based on the address signals;

a plurality of first lines and a plurality of second lines, wherein a portion of the plurality of first lines are coupled to a first portion of the plurality of second lines using a plurality of vias, wherein the portion of the plurality of first lines is selectively coupled to a portion of the plurality of data bits, and wherein a first of the portion of the plurality of first lines is coupled to the first portion of the plurality of second lines through a first of the plurality of vias and a second of the portion of the plurality of first lines is coupled to the first portion of the plurality of second lines through a second of the plurality of vias; and

a one bit wide output port coupled to receive a signal from the first portion of the plurality of second lines based on a placement of the first via or the second via.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the bus width is inversely proportional to a number of vias associated with the plurality of first lines.

21. The system of claim 19, wherein the portion of the plurality of first lines is selectively coupled to the plurality of data bits using a plurality of transistors that are selectively activated using the address signals.

22. The system of claim 19, wherein the signal received by the one bit wide output port corresponds to a selected bit in the portion of the plurality of data bits.

23. The system of claim 19 further comprising a device that includes a plurality of physical layers, wherein the portion of the plurality of first lines is on a first of the plurality of physical layers, wherein the portion of the plurality of second lines is on a second of the plurality of physical layers, and wherein the plurality of vias form physical connections between the first layer and the second layer.

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